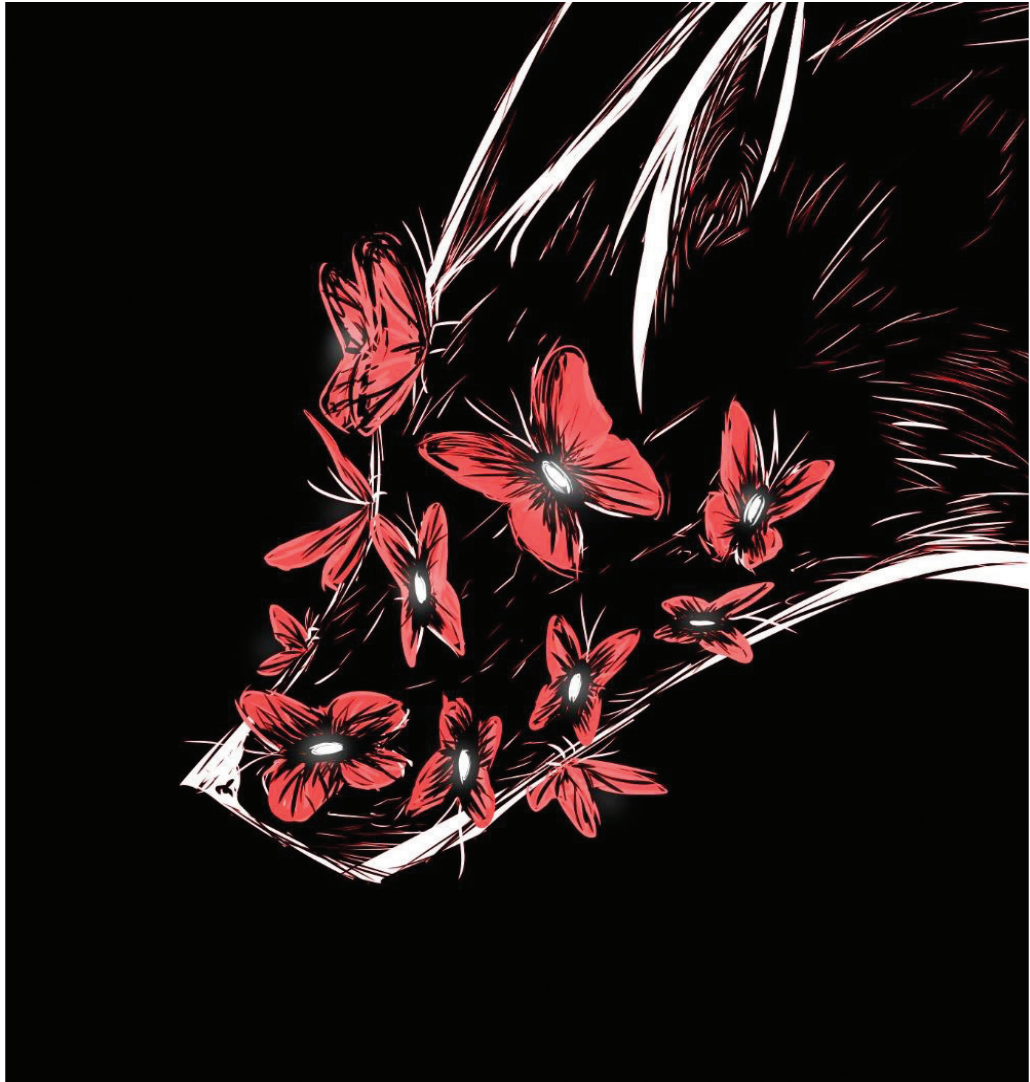


louden singletree

WRITING AND VISUAL ART *from the*
UNIVERSITY OF THE FRASER VALLEY



ISSUE 11 / SPRING 2019

louden singletree

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE FRASER VALLEY'S JOURNAL
OF CONTEMPORARY WRITERS AND ARTISTS

louden singletree

ISSUE 11

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Singletree

for the authors

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Vice President, Students &

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The *Louden Singletree*

acknowledges that it is located

on the unceded and traditional

Stó:lō territories.

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WITH SPECIAL

THANKS TO THE

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Viveca Braaten

Jinnie Saran

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Silone
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Thank You

to our sponsors for their financial contributions that
made publishing our magazine possible.

The *Louden Singletree* graciously thanks the following sponsors
for their aid in this year's publication.



Editor's Note

Welcome – students, professors, friends, enemies, lovers, bros – to the eleventh publication of UFV's *Louden Singletree* literary and visual art magazine.

Over the submission period, we received a vast array of poetry, visual art, and short fiction. The selection of pieces by the editors was not made easily – in fact, it was quite a challenge. We received 67 works of literature and 14 visual arts pieces, for a grand total of 81 submissions this year. Submissions ranged widely in subject and form. Overall, the works in this year's magazine include a wide range of diverse pieces – from an idyllic wintery scene in a coffee shop to an eerie and chilling tale full of foreshadowing, intrigue, and suspense.

Writing and creative expression serve as the ultimate method of preserving and spreading cultural change, balance, and passion to the next generations. For many, this may serve as the first step in leaving their own mark on the literary and artistic world.

We would also like to take this time to acknowledge a special thank you to Andrea MacPherson, who provided invaluable guidance and knowledge during the task of making this year's publication a reality. In addition, a second thank you to Robert Wiersema, who took the time to write this magazine's wonderful foreword.

And as for you, the reader: you deserve a thank you entirely of your own, for as long as there are readers, the *Louden Singletree* will continue to provide the best creative works that the UFV community has to offer. Enjoy!

Louden Singletree Editorial Board 2019

Foreword

Most of the writers I know have a shelf of their own books occupying pride of place in their office or writing space. It's not a brag shelf, though; the books aren't there to impress other people. They're for us, a record of where we have been, what we have done. On the rough days, they're a reminder that we can do it, all present appearances to the contrary.

On my personal shelf there is a slim volume, with nothing on the spine. It's a copy of *Tremor*, the University of Victoria's English Students' Society literary review from 1992. This magazine includes, alongside the work of my classmates, my first published works. To clarify: I had been writing for the student newspaper and the paper in my hometown, so I was familiar with bylines, but this issue of *Tremor*, this is where it all really began for me. *Tremor* holds a special place in my heart; it was here that I saw myself not as a reporter, not as a journalist, but as a writer. (That the works published in *Tremor* are my only published poems makes it even more special for me.)

I am confident in this prediction: twenty or thirty years from now, this issue of *Louden Singletree* will hold the same pride, the same force, the same sacredness, for many of the writers whose works are published here. It will be on a shelf, with hardcovers and paperbacks, foreign editions and translations, anthologies and chapbooks. It will be a reminder that all great things have a beginning. For all the writers whose works grace these covers, I greet you in the early stages of a great adventure, and wish you a wonderful journey.

And if you're a reader of the *Louden Singletree*, you're in for a treat. I wish you good reading.

Dream true.
Robert Wiersema

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THE UNIVERSITY OF THE FRASER VALLEY'S JOURNAL
OF CONTEMPORARY WRITERS AND ARTISTS

The Louden Singletree is UFV's literary and visual arts journal. Since its inception in 2009, the Louden Singletree has been a forum in which students, alumni, faculty, and staff of the university can share their creative work.

COVER ARTWORK / JOCELYN COUPLAND

Good-Bye Butterfly

2018. *Digital art, 1378 x 1930 pix*

Good-Bye Butterfly takes the image of the butterfly – a creature known for its innocence, vibrant colours, and beautiful wings – and pairs it with the coyote – a creature known for its cunning. Coyotes are hunters and carrion-feeders, while butterflies eat nectar. However, some species of butterflies also eat sweat, blood, and tears in an effort to get the nutrients they need to survive. Both the crafty coyote and the beautiful butterfly see the world through similar eyes.

This pairing of two wildly different animals creates an unsettling image that retains an echo of the beauty inherent in nature. The glow of the butterflies conveys an atmosphere of another world, something that shifts the paradigm of what should be possible into the realm of the unknown. The same way that oil leaking on the pavement shimmers like a rainbow; the unpredictable, dark side of life which still holds moments worth looking at. The use of red brings to mind blood and decay, but blood is also sustenance, vital for humans, and a potentially tasty treat for scavengers like coyotes and butterflies. Even the most innocent and crafty of creatures can have something in common if you know where to look.

SCOTT MCQUARRIE

Snowball

I pulled up to the neglected old house early, the moving truck sputtering to a stop. I'm always early. I like the quiet and the time to settle my mind before work. I usually enjoy this job. Moving...it was tough, physical work but I don't notice. I love the lifting, stacking, packing. Beats the hell out of sitting all day, with nothing to do but think. But not today. Today I would be forced to think and remember. It had to be this damn house. What were the odds?

I reached for my wallet and pulled out the creased old photo, its edges rounded from use. My son. He'd be three now, no longer the chubby faced baby in the picture. Three and talking, walking, probably squawking a lot. Maybe starting to wonder where the hell I was.

A Kermit-green, rust stained Buick pulled up, on time for once. I quickly stuffed the photo back into my wallet.

"Hey Billy," Joe said, putting on his mirrored sunglasses to protect his blood-shot eyes from the grey day.

"Hey Joe. You get the coffee?" It was Joe's turn but he was about as reliable as his Buick.

"Course I did. I always do. Need it, too. Tired as shit," he replied. Joe had a way with words. Truth was, I needed it too. Today was gonna suck.

"Same here," I said, pulling out the ramp from the moving truck.

"Some old lady today. Hopefully won't be one of those damn hoarders," said Joe, taking out the coffee from his truck and bringing it over.

"Old widow McGregor. Be nice. She's had enough crap for one lifetime," I cautioned, taking the black coffee. It looked tiny in my club-sized hands.

"You know her?" asked Joe.

"I grew up around the block. She was always around. Her husband was the janitor at my middle school. Everybody knew who she was. Always buying lem-

onade and cookies from the kids' stands and stuff," I explained.

"No shit," said Joe. 'Shit' was Joe's favorite word. "What happened to the janitor?"

"Died," I replied.

"No shit. But how?" Joe asked, annoyed.

"Heart attack."

"Huh," said Joe with his usual deep insight.

"Yeah. It's the shits alright. Like this coffee," I said, dumping the coffee out onto the lawn, the dead old grass sucking it up greedily. "Let's get this over with."

"Okay, okay," said Joe, looking at me kinda serious for a second. "No problem. Take it easy," and he gulped down the rest of his coffee.

It really wasn't that bad. Old widow McGregor didn't have much. It looked like she was as poor as you'd expect from an old widower. A beat-up old pine kitchen table and mismatched chairs. A stained couch with a seventies flower pattern on it. Maybe sixties. The usual boxes, a piss stained mattress, its urine smell sadly familiar. And a huge old chest of drawers that we were trying to wrestle out of the master bedroom.

"It's slipping!" yelled Joe. Too late. The chest tipped over and fell to the ground with a crash. One of the drawers slid out all crooked. "Shit!" said Joe, with feeling. I reached down and pulled the drawer out all the way so I could try to slide it back in straight. Something was taped to the back.

"What's that?" Joe reached down, pulled the bundle off and unwrapped the newspaper from around it. As he worked the layers of tape off the bundle, I picked up one of the torn newspaper pages and looked at the date: September 24th, 1996. Slowly, Joe whispered, "Hooollleeeey shit," as he pulled free a wad of cash. There had to be thousands there. It was a thick wad, full of fifties and twenties, even a few hundreds. "Jackpot."

"No," I said.

"No, what?"

“We aren’t keeping it.”

“The fuck we aren’t,” Joe responded with an edge to his voice.

“No way.”

“Are you shitting me?” asked Joe. “This job pays us shit. Don’t look a gift cow in the mouth, man.”

“Gift horse. It’s ‘don’t look a gift horse in the mouth,’” I corrected.

“I don’t give a shit. Finders keepers. We’re taking it,” he replied.

“No.” My voice was quiet.

Joe looked at me, hard. He was in good shape from moving. Just under six feet. Skinny, but tough. Wiry type. “You gonna stop me?” he challenged.

“If I have to.”

“If you could.”

“Joe, you know Billy’s not my real name, right?” I asked softly, after a few seconds.

“Oh, yeah?” Joe answered with feigned curiosity.

“Yeah. It’s a nickname. I got it in Matsqui. Two years for a six-month sentence. You know why it took me so long to get out?” I asked as I turned to look placidly out the window.

“No...” Joe gripped the cash so tight his knuckles were bloodless white.

“See, I liked to be alone. Solitary suited me just fine. I couldn’t handle all those people looking at me all the time. Like they knew. Every time I went back into general, I’d beat some poor bastard so I’d get put back in solitary. Just some random guy. Like the guards beat guys with their billy clubs. ‘Billy Club’, they called me. Then just ‘Billy’. Now, I’m not saying that you wouldn’t put up a scrap, Joe,” I said, turning slowly back to face him. “But I would beat you stupid in about two seconds.”

After a long pause, Joe said, “Well, shit.”

“Not old widow McGregor. Anyone else, but not her,” I said as I held out my hand for the cash.

“Well, shit,” he repeated, slowly placing the bundle into my hand. “What’s

that old horse got on you, man?”

“Old cow,” I corrected. “It’s ‘old cow’, not ‘old horse’.”

* * *

Joe and I finished loading up the truck. It was too late to unload at old widow McGregor’s new place today. On the way home, I detoured the truck a couple of blocks east. I pulled up across from the middle school. I had barely turned off the engine before I was pulled back to that night, the memories silver-blue and haloed.

I waded through the newly fallen snow alone, pushing ever-growing snowballs to the crest of the hill above the school’s lane. The balls drifted down the hill, like the swirling, sticky snow that fell from the sky, picking up pounds and speed before coming to rest in front of the lone car, blocking it in. Five, six, seven two-hundred pound misshapen marshmallows. I’m spent, along with my anger. I turned and trundled towards my house, praying the lights were off when I got there.

Shaking my head to clear the memories, I started the truck up, put it in gear and headed home, drops of sweat beading my forehead in the cool air.

The next morning, the Buick pulled up on time, for twice. “You bring the coffee?” Joe asked.

“When have I ever forgot the coffee?” I replied tiredly.

“Shit, never,” said Joe. “But you don’t seem yourself.”

“Yeah.” I passed him a cup of Tims, black.

We spent the morning unloading. A lot of boxes for such a small place. We had just finished with the kitchen table when a frail, wavering voice called out from the front door, “Hellooooo?”

“In here,” I hollered back, my stomach knotting up. In walked old widow McGregor. She looked just the same, but missing color and forty pounds. “Hi Mrs. McGregor.”

“Robby Baird,” she said. “It’s been ages. So nice to see you.” She came in for the typical unnecessary hug old people always give you. “How have you been?”

“Keeping busy,” I answered. “This is Joe. Joe, Mrs. McGregor.”

“A pleasure, Joe,” she greeted warmly.

“Hey. Think I’ll take an early lunch so you two can catch up,” said Joe, leaving with a whispered, “Shit,” he thought I wouldn’t catch.

I unceremoniously gave her the money Joe and I had found and explained what had happened.

“Tom never did trust banks or bankers. He was forever hiding money around the place. I thought I had found it all but I guess I was wrong. Thank-you,” she said, the welcome surprise showing on her face.

“Welcome,” was all I could muster.

“I’m not going to lie, that money is a Godsend and He used you to deliver it. Which is why I want you and Joe to have some of it. Honesty like that deserves a reward,” she said as she searched my downcast eyes.

“I can’t speak for Joe, but I can’t take your money,” I replied.

“Of course you can. And you will,” she said emphatically.

“No, I can’t.”

“Please, I insist.”

“I can’t!” I yelled, slamming my hand down on the rough, beat up old table.

Startled, she whispered, “Why in heavens not, Robby?”

I picked at a sliver in the rough table top. “I don’t deserve it. I took enough from you already.”

“What on earth are you talking about?” she asked, concerned and bewildered.

“Nothing,” I said, still looking at the table as though it was the most fascinating thing in the room.

“Well something’s certainly gotten you pretty upset.”

I looked up at her. Big mistake. “I uh, I…” I stammered, unable to put it into words. But I couldn’t keep it in anymore. The guilt and shame of a secret long buried. It had festered and grown with each passing year, spreading poison into all

I did, into all I was. It wanted out. "It was me. It was me," I whispered, choking down the sobs that threatened to burst out.

"What was you? Why are you so upset? You did a good thing returning that money, Robby," said old widow McGregor, unable to put the pieces together, to see what I had done to her. The concern in her caring eyes burned away the last of the cocoon I had spun to lock in the truth.

"I rolled those huge snowballs down the hill," I muttered. The truth tentatively stretched its wings for a moment, then took flight with a flourish. "I blocked in Mr. McGregor's car that night. When I came to school next day and heard he'd died, I knew. Everyone knew, it was all over school. You could see in the snow where he'd tried to push them. His car was still there. It was me, Mrs. McGregor." Head in my billy club hands, unable to hold in the truth or the sobs any longer, I finished it, "It was me. I killed him. I'm sorry. I'm sorry."

"Oh God. Oh God, Robby," old widow McGregor sat back in shocked silence while it sank in, the old wooden chair creaking in protest. "So many years you've carried this." Then she leaned forward suddenly, grabbed both my hands in her tiny, weathered ones and looked at me fiercely, her moist grey eyes burning with intensity. "Now you listen to me Robby Baird, and you listen good. Tom died that night and sure enough. But he died at home, shoveling our driveway. Not at the school."

"W-what?" I stammered, my throat tightening, unable to comprehend. My head swirled as I grabbed the table to steady myself. "That can't be...his car was there."

"Yes. Oh, you blocked him in good, Robby. So good he gave up trying to move those snowballs pretty quick. He told me all about it when he got home. 'Some punk kids', he'd said. 'Had to walk home'. But he figured he'd better at least shovel our driveway before bed. He was nearly done when it happened."

"But the kids...everyone knew," I said, my ears buzzing, unable to hear the truth after so many years of believing the lie.

"Ha, kids! You know how these rumors happen. Take on a life of their own.

Sort of...snowball,” she explained, a twist of irony in her tone. “You didn’t kill Tom, Robby. Get that straight. Too much bacon and cigarettes and the first snow in three years killed Tom. You get that through your head, Robby Baird.”

The room blurred and shifted as I stared at the peeling paisley wallpaper above the sink, memories of rage and regret swirling among the floral pattern. All those years. The fights, the anger, snapping at anyone who looked at me funny, wondering if they knew. Deserving everything I got at home. How could it be that it wasn’t me? My breathing became shallow, the full weight of the lie and what it had done to me pressed down on my chest until it exploded in a wave of grief.

The lie slowly flaked off me as a new reality gradually opened. One without shame and excuses. One where I didn’t deserve every bad thing that came my way. What did it mean? Slowly, the wallpaper came back into focus, the patterns alive with color and promise.

Somehow sensing my need for a way forward, Mrs. McGregor said, “Now, since you won’t take my money, I’ll need you to come around for cookies and coffee. Every week. Saturday mornings are good. I’ll tell you a few tales about my Tom. Nutter, he was. God love him.”

Perhaps I could come to terms with the devastating lie by hearing more of the truth. “Yes, ma’am. I’d like that,” I managed.

“Good, then that’s settled. Truth is, I could use a little company myself,” she said. “Now, my things aren’t going to unpack themselves.”

I lost myself in the moving, lifting, stacking, unpacking. The movements familiar and comforting. Taking a life and its memories, picking it up and putting it down again somewhere new. Putting up old pictures on new walls, their owners soon forgetting where they used to hang, so long ago.

Driving home, I stopped by the middle school again, the daylight fading and the halogen school lights slowly brightening. I reached down and pulled the creased photo from my wallet. A baby’s face, not unlike any other

except for its likeness to my own, stared back at me. Two more years and he'll be going off to his first day of school. What will he learn in two years? Climbing, jumping, maybe riding his bike, if he has one. God, what if he doesn't have one? Maybe he has one of those new ones without the pedals, so he'll learn his balance early.

Two more years. Two more years of laughing, learning, growing, falling and crying without me. I tucked the photo with its worn corners carefully back into my wallet. Putting the truck in gear, I pulled out onto the street, the headlights leading me on through the growing dusk. Two more years without me. Without his dad. A fierce, unbidden purpose ignited deep in my guts and spat itself out in a harsh, gravelly whisper, "To hell with that."

BRANDON WOLFE

Bentley

2018. Charcoal, 22 inches x 30 inches

With my art I wish to capture the personality and spirit of the subject I draw. With this piece, a lovely couple had me draw their puppy, Bentley. With charcoal, I aimed to create a drawing that looks like you could reach out and pet him, feeling how soft he is.





SARAH SOVEREIGN

Head in the Clouds

2018. Photograph, 8" x 12"

As an artist and therapist with an MD in counselling – and a woman with a late AD/HD diagnosis – I see myself inside the pages of Sari Solden’s book, *Women with Attention Deficit Disorder*, and subsequently created this image: The Dreamer, with her head in the clouds, hiding her true self away. There is care in understanding oneself, of seeking support and resources, in education and awareness of AD/HD – not as a personal problem, but a neurological condition that can be worked with and not used to define the entirety of an individual. Furthermore, there is the knowledge that its deficits also include strengths, such as creativity, problem-solving, and hyperfocus, amongst others.

In the image, the woman stands in the cold water, adrift in the clouds and the lake. Her bright red dress makes her stand out in the colourlessness: she is seen, but obscured, and perhaps misunderstood. She grasps at the edge of her dress, contemplating stepping forward into the open air. In creating this image, I must acknowledge the valuable assistance of A., and model Anna Ratzlaff.

BETHANY CANNON

Whispers

Secrets brushed past my parents' lips
like a breeze rustling through leaves;
soft, with the promise of more.
I sat quietly, their words air
barely filling the space between them:
telling me things I wasn't supposed to know.

A family friend who went away for the weekend,
returning to a home pitch and empty;
her husband found sharing a belt with a tree.

A cousin who thought a knife was a paintbrush,
using her body as a canvas.
Red was the only color she knew to paint with.

My great-grandfather, abandoning his son –
trading in for a new family.
I wondered what suicide meant –
and how my oma saved my grandfather's life.

The first husband my mother had –
the dark gaps he left in her life;
how courts back then didn't care
about bruises and missed meals.
I learned his name was Daniel.

I whispered my secret to the wind once,
practicing to tell my parents.
It rattled through trees, rustling with laughter.
I knew exhaustion wasn't worth whispers.
So, I never told anyone
how I learned what suicide meant.

SAMUEL YOUNG

34 East Side

The wheels on the bus go round
and round as the bus goes around
this broke-down town.

Broken folk take
blue bags eastbound.
Get out by the McD's
and the recycling compound;
trading trash for change while
too-young girls look down
at their phones and
their round bellies.

I can't meet their gaze,
so I stare out downtown.
Knowing I can get off
but I'm not sure they can, so
round and round they all go.

And so do the days:
thousands of cycles
repeating, unbroken;
broken down people on
broken town buses.

Swishing and shushing,
pushing and pulling,
choking and gasping,
all through the town.

KRYSTAL SAVARD

Admission to a First Lover

I was too young –
young as in naïve, innocent.
You should have known better,
I trusted you.
Raised like a brother but not by blood;
always good friends, never lovers.
I said no
 but you did it anyway.

Wrapping your arm around my neck and pulling me to you,
smothering my lips with yours;
“Does this feel like a brother?” you asked me.
I wanted to say yes,
as in I’ve always thought of you as one,
but instead I said no, because brothers don’t do this.
uncomfortable
scared.
Why aren’t you stopping?
I said no
 but you did it anyway.

Groping and grabbing; I wanted to cry,
call out for help, but
I didn’t want to hurt your feelings.
I didn’t want to hurt your feelings?
I should have screamed –
help was just down the hall, but
I didn’t want to make a scene.
Looking back, I should have.
I said no
 but you did it anyway.

It's just a kiss, I let you.
Nothing wrong with a kiss;
but you didn't want to just kiss.
How did my pants end up down at my knees?
Please stop!
Oh god, make it stop!
Thick, unwelcome fingers, where nothing has been before.
It hurts.
I said no
 but you did it anyway.

Slobbering and moaning in my ear you growl out,
"Why aren't you cumming?"
Because I don't want this!
Did you finally notice?
I go numb and another part of me takes over.
She plays along, controlling my hands.
I'm helpless, watching my body do things I don't want;
hot sticky liquid all over my hand.
You smiled, oblivious to my pain,
and told me not to tell anyone.
I'm screaming inside.
I said no!
 but you did it anyway.

You go back to your room and
I go to the bathroom,
tears pour from my eyes as I fall to my knees;
Did you hear me?
Did you hear me scream to God?
Beg for forgiveness?
What did I have to be forgiven for?
I said no
 but you did it anyway.

Constant nausea, self-loathing
no shower washes it away.
Our families meet like normal,
but I can't look at anyone.
Your voice rings over and over in my head,
"Don't tell anyone."
The thought of you, even years later, still makes me shiver.
I said no
 but you did it anyway.

Someone new;
eyes like seafoam, ever changing and swirling
sometimes calming, sometimes tempestuous.
Capture me; curiosity? desire?
I see that darkness in them,
the same lust as you.
I say no
 so, he holds me instead.

LUCY MULDER

The Frosted Window

Sitting in the corner of a cozy café
gazing through the frosted window,
I watch the crystal snowflakes fall.
Sipping slowly on a velvety smooth espresso.

Gazing through the frosted window,
I notice the street lamps are now on.
Sipping slowly on a velvety smooth espresso,
my body thaws.

I notice the street lamps are now on,
as figure skating couples dance the streets.
My body thaws,
the clarity of my warmth is strong.

As figure skating couples dance the streets,
I watch the crystal snowflakes fall.
The clarity of my warmth is strong.
Sitting in the corner of a cozy café.

DARIEN UNGER

Pompeii

The results of your disaster is etched in bones
etched like someone shook your skeleton like an
etch-a-sketch carving wherever the beads fell

If a group of archaeologists were to discover you they'd
know how to read your etch-work map of collagen
written in the universal language of violence

They'd find: wearing down of the shoulders and knees
(heavier on the left)
a series of stress fractures skull ribs (left again) and
the second phalanges of the entire left hand
broken thumb knuckle and two outermost
metacarpals on the right

would they look upon your broken body of bones
with gentle hands brush the dust and ash from aching
joints lift the heavy heat from what little's left of lungs
place you together properly in one piece upon your pyre
lay you down to rest
or would they plaster over your prostration in the name of preserva-
tion?

would they open you to the public?
Would they care would they pity would they have mercy
or would they flock forth
to gawk snapping brittle bones
and photos like tourists naught but consumers
of tragedy and human depravity

AASHA KHOYRATTY

8.6 Million People, 468 Square Miles

you're walking across the bridge
water rippling beneath you
life bustling around you.
eighteen years old to buy cigarettes here
menthol or cherry—the choice is all yours
you'll give three to the man on the sidewalk
in the military uniform who is talking to himself
sit with him on the curb
light a smoke, light his
pretend he is talking to you.
never been afraid of heights
excited by them, more so
midair—milliseconds between the diving board
and the hard clap of the water
the plane that had just taken off. the split
second feeling of having no gravity at all
but only if you lift your legs just right
the excitement was never the height
the excitement was always the fall
you realized that
you are anonymous as you calculate the risk

the drop, the fall, the shock
whether or not the cars flying past you
or the tourists taking selfies
would even notice or care
if you fell back
ever so slowly
and your body smacked the water
ever so quietly
drowned out by
car horns and voices
drowned by
water
filling your lungs.
there's nowhere to swim around here
very few places to truly find peace
he won't notice when you leave
he'll pick up the butt you left on the ground
and light it as he stares into a puddle
flashing lights reflect off the ripples
and then nothing
he doesn't hear the sirens—neither do you
neither do they—neither does anyone
not in this place;
not today

JASON KOOP

Her Nature

Tranquil water flows
down the cliffside of her back
right before my eyes.

Her sky reflected
from ocean's mirror,
framed by her coastline.

The sky divided
by a delicate, slight peak,
graceful in stature.

Pink flower petals
unveil gleaming ivory,
her rays of sunshine.

Her heart's Inferno
radiating heat and light,
transfixing my soul.

KRYSTAL SAVARD

Wildfire

I come by it honestly,
an heirloom passed
from my father
and grandmother before me.
“Depression,” Alison Pick

The heat of a thousand bonfires
combine to create a sea; waves
of red flames, twisting and turning,
lapping at trees and brush,
drowning the forest in smoke and ash.
It rises up within me, this red heat
consuming all thought and reason,
until I am nothing but the fire;
a storm designed to burn –
I come by it honestly.

I tried to fight it as a child,
having seen the consequences
on my mother’s face.
When the gale would surge up within me,
curve around my heart and threaten to burst forth
in a shower of white heat,
I would close my eyes and remember the rain.
Imagine the droplets start, the cold crystals sizzling
on my burning flesh,

until the downpour would wash over me,
cleansing my battered soul and I would once again curse
an heirloom passed.

I used to watch him burn
everything in his path, like flames
that thirst for trees and no rain can quench them.
He would start to smoulder
quietly burn over something small
then blaze and spark, igniting a gale of
smoke that suffocates the flourishing
blooms grown by love, turning
them black with ash; the only gifts I got
from my father.

Just as the earth renews
after fire has ravaged it bare,
so does love with an apology.
Yet, the tainted black remains,
the red embers a reminder of a storm
always brewing beneath the dry
surface; like burning roots
that speed through the forest awaiting
to unleash their fury – like him
and my grandmother before me.

SCOTT MCQUARRIE

Oh Christmas Trio

The boy laid on his back and looked straight up into the tangle of plastic branches and colored lights. He squinted his eyes so everything would blur a little. The haloed pinks, greens, yellows and blues winked in and out of view as he turned his head from side to side. A rainbow flashed from a glass cut angel's wings.

He wiggled in a little further, so his head was right next to the fake trunk. There, deep in the tree, the lights were fewer but shone more brightly against the dark boughs. He tried to peek through all the branches, right to the top. The boy imagined he could just see the star up there, a bright galaxy of pinpricks in the dark sky.

He looked left and gasped, then giggled a quiet laugh of pure joy. "I found it! The pickle!" he whispered. It was wedged between two branches near the trunk about a third of the way up. The pickle ornament they hid every year – the first one to find it got to open the first present. His parents thought it was lost since they didn't see it when they were packing up the decorations last Christmas. "I found it!" He would keep the secret until Christmas morning, then reach in and surprise them all.

He folded his hands across his chest and stared up, his face lit up in a smile of secret knowledge and triumph, his eyes twinkling brighter than the star above.

* * *

The man walked into the living room, trying to remember where he had seen the extra tape. He was almost done wrapping his wife's present when it ran out. Typical. While he did a quick scan of the likely places, a movement under the Christmas tree caught his eye. Two feet were sticking out the bottom of it and there was a quiet giggle coming from them.

He slowed right down, quieting his pace. He got down on his hands and knees, silently stalking his prey. He pounced. "Gotcha!" he yelled, grabbing the feet with

both hands.

“Aaaaaaaaahhhhhhgggg!” answered the feet, struggling hopelessly against the iron grip. Not content with his success, the man pulled on the feet and a boy emerged, laughing and squirming like a landed fish.

“No Daddy, no!”

After a good tickle, the boy shimmied back under the tree while the man sat back on his heels, the laughter slowly fading. He looked at the tree and, shuffling a bit closer, reached in gently to remove an ornament. ‘Our first Christmas’ was the caption. Two small, toque-clad cartoon figures held hands inside a giant heart bedecked with a wreath and the year ‘2006’. Had it been twelve years already?

The man rocked back and sat cross-legged on the floor, staring at the ornament. His mind wandered timelessly through snippets of wishes and kisses, adventure and worry. Screaming births and screaming fights. Cold distance and cuddled closeness. He smiled his wry, crooked smile and carefully looped the ornament back over the bough.

* * *

“Gotcha!”

“Aaaaaaaaahhhhhhgggg!”

The old man startled awake in his chair, trying to orient himself after the sudden disturbance of his slumber. A man was pulling a kid out from under the Christmas tree by his feet. His son and grandson. He was visiting for the holidays. Funny how it took longer to get his bearings than it used to.

He watched his son tickle his grandson then ponder over an ornament. He still remembered some of the ornaments he and his wife used to put on their tree, so long ago. A real tree, not one of these pathetic plastic sacrileges. Helen’s favorite ornament had been an old, hand carved wooden cross with a faded green wreath around it. She’d loved Christmas almost as much as what it stood for. God, he missed her. Guess God had missed her too.

Still, he had to admit that there was something to the faith she'd had. Something that shone through her and had drawn him to her so many years ago. Not unlike his daughter-in-law. Two peas in a pod they were, those two.

"Remember this, son," he said quietly. "Life won't always be so good. You're a lucky man."

"I'm a blessed man," his son responded, slowly getting up. "And I will remember. Always." They sat in reverent silence, sensing the weight of the moment.

The quiet was suddenly shattered when, unable to keep the secret any longer, the legs sticking out from under the tree yelled, "I found the pickle!"

JINNIE SARAN

Raw Learning

We read about our world in textbooks,
and look at the images and films.
We are provided with testimonials,
but I crave closer contact with its rich history.

Vimy Ridge,
the major Canadian victory,
and the tunnels where our soldiers fought.

I admire its tourist attractions;
the Anne Frank house,
with its Secret Annex,
and the pages of a young girl's life.

I don't want to learn indirectly,
from behind a brown wooden desk,
and a closed classroom door;
I want to learn from the world itself,
to be in the field, immersed in the primary experience.

ARIEL EZERGAILIS

Lessons Straight People Have Taught Me:

I am not gay.
I am queer; I am questioning;
I am an ambiguous, open-ended mystery.
I am a polymorphous, ever-changing being
charged with sexual energy –
and you are entranced; you love to watch me.
You love to stare.

You support my cause.
You support it enough to ignore those of you
that push my sisters out of your open doors
and kick my brothers into the streets without remorse.
You ignore those of you spouting prayers
to your god, ending with false amens.
You support me until it's inconvenient.

I am delusional.
I am truly out of touch to believe that my concerns
are, truly, concerns; my struggles ended five years ago
when you legalized me –
anything that comes after that,
it's a result of my own hysteria.
You've done enough for me, haven't you?
There must come a point when I stop asking for things.

I must stop waiting for handouts.
What am I doing, standing around street corners,
waiting for someone to stop and hear me?
You are not obliged to stop.
Stop shouting.
Take what I want;
do not wait for any more of your gifts.

Love is love,
except when it's not;
except when I'm biting my tongue
like I'm biting the bullet
from the gun about to kill me.

Not all of you are killers.
Some of you are
but that doesn't mean anything to you
and it shouldn't mean anything to me.
Playing Russian Roulette never used to be this dramatic.

Twenty years down the line
and you have taught me
to love myself and hate myself in the same breath.
But most importantly, you have taught me
that I am not gay...
unless you say that I am.

LUCY MULDER

Only a Fantasy

The dark wintry days are here.
My purple lips quiver as night falls.
Wool socks cover my frosty feet.
The bright warm flame in the fireplace ignites.
Wrapped up in a heavy blanket, I sit,
nestled beside the fireplace holding a hot cup of peppermint tea.
Now I wish I was dancing with bronzed skin, barefoot on dewy grass.
Smelling the campfire that endlessly burns,
oh, to wake up with warm rays of sun on my back,
listening to the birds sing in their wild paradise.
The protracted days of summer can't come soon enough.
Dreaming.
The protracted days of summer can't come soon enough,
listening to the birds sing in their wild paradise.
Oh, to wake up with warm rays of sun on my back.
Smelling the campfire that endlessly burns.
Now I wish I was dancing with bronzed skin, barefoot on dewy grass.
Nestled beside the fireplace holding a hot cup of peppermint tea.
Wrapped up in a heavy blanket, I sit.
The bright warm flame in the fireplace ignites.
Wool socks cover my frosty feet.
My purple lips quiver as night falls.
The dark wintry days are here.

DARIEN UNGER

Bermuda

Anger: it's
a sea of bitter
salt waves, baring jagged
rock teeth, sinking, sinking in
a blank grey mind of rumbling
skies, where thunder screams, where lightning punches,
unforgiving waves tear into ships, destroying, destroying, destroying
bows, hulls, and sails of relationships, erupting into a tsunami
of rage, darker than the depths and twice as deadly -
it crashes, capsizes, and throws you into relentless waters and
you sink, dragged into disastrous depths, dragging, dragging, dragging until
you're drowning: rage fills your lungs copper and salt on your tongue you can't breathe
drowningdrowningdrowning. Nothing but saltwater and rage lives in your lungs.
Until it bursts.

The wind is wailing, waves whipping, you're bashed against the rocks, it seems endless,
but it breaks. There is still wind and waves, teeth and anger, but they start to peter off.
The rumbling, blank mind-clouds part; there is no sun, just pooling numbness.
Your ship is wrecked, your fists bruised and bloody from bashing against
the jagged teeth of the sea. The waves have settled, have shifted from anger into
brackish guilt and dullness and you empty water and salt
from lungs and eyes. Your lungs are hollow and
so are you, like the beach, empty, after
the tide retreats into its depths.
You are beyond exhausted,
sea-weathered, but you
have survived. So,
you rebuild.
Beyond the horizon,
another storm awaits.

SEQUEL ADAMSON

Butterfly

I breathe in.

The smell of his skin on my shirt,
so intoxicating,
my vision goes blurry and
my friends take away my keys.

Drunk.

On that dopamine rush
I feel
whenever you're around
I feel

my stomach fluttering,
ten million monarch butterflies
migrating south
from your lips.
South past your collar bones,
to your stomach.

But your stomach
is made of glass
and I see your bile
burn up
each one of my butterflies –
but they keep flying,

and I'm hoping come spring
they'll come back.

Though my love
keeps melting in your stomach acid,
I am cocooned in your embrace
thinking one day you'll change –
one day I'll change.

Transform.

But then there's her.
She's so young she's got to be a caterpillar,
but her wings already more beautiful than my own.

A painted lady.

Just as beautiful as a monarch,
but all the less poisonous.
With you I really thought I was beautiful.
I really thought I was special.
With you I felt the wind below my wings,
gliding me through the sweet fields of daisies.

But I was a moth.

And you were the sun – not the wind.
When I thought you were warming,
you were burning –
burning my delicate wings.

You give me skin cancer.
A melanoma, melodrama
filled morning.

But I am a moth;
I can't be caught in the sunlight.

But you preferred to collect butterflies anyway.

SEQUEL ADAMSON

Eve and Her Apple of Evil

The tale of Eve,
trusting a snake –
or two.

God favored man as his divine creation.
No wonder Eve left for pagan rites
and sweet rituals of flesh.

A holy-ordained, arranged marriage
is still a slave trade.
This is garden variety inequality.

Adam only wanted to taste her fruit,
fill her with sugar, put down no roots.

Adam wears no leaves because God put no shame in his body,
He took it out of him in the shape of a rib,
and created the mother of all of my sin.

Pain and punishment.
Having to carry to term the world's mistake –
her mistake made in the dark,
underneath a tree.

At the birth,
her legs spread open like Pandora's box.
All her sin and shame flow into her daughters,
anger to the brothers.

Forgive me father, for I'm confused;
how can we praise a woman for preserving her fruit,
but cast stones at another who refuses to stay ignorant?
I just can't seem to find any truths.

The mistake made by the flesh of female persuasion;
the hunger for knowledge suffered by our ovarian ancestors,
was never forgiven.

Making all of me descended from sin.

KALEY SMALE

Hereditary

My mother used to pour vodka into a mug
every night and pretend it was tea –
as if I couldn't smell the liquor lingering
on her lips when she tucked me into bed at night.

I was fifteen when I told her I wanted to kill myself,
so she started hiding Xanax around the house –
like a dysfunctional easter egg hunt.
She'd call me after school to tell me which windowsill
she left a pill on, my reward for making it through the day.

When I had my heart broken for the first time,
she fed me every pill in our medicine cabinet
until I forgot why I was sad.

She gave me a heart-shaped pendant
engraved with the words fuck you
and told me it was our way of rebelling.
She learned this way of life from her mother
and passed the tradition onto me.

The women in my family never learned how to feel,
we taught ourselves how to be numb
and for generations now we've been addicts,
hidden under expensive coats and delusional smiles –
my mother made me tough, but
I hope I never have a daughter.

SAMUEL YOUNG

For the People Who Believe Their Government Fakes School Shootings

I want to grab both your shoulders and shake you,
the way grieving mother's crumpled bodies rattle
as they weep on sidewalks.

I want to scream suffering in your ears,
until the anguish of lost boys and girls
blooms red in your cranium,
and pollinates out your sockets.

I want to stick plastic explosive
to the walls of your ignorance.
Detonate it from a hilltop,
and watch you implode from a distance.

Because you need to feel this.
Because cowardice in the face of tragedy
only magnifies the world's pain.

So, step out of your doomsday bunker,
hold your loved ones close,
and paint a rainbow of chemtrails.

You see monsters all around you...
you're almost right.

KATIE DIESPECKER

Melt

Mixed media, specifications not provided

The human condition is in a state of constant change. Our emotions and our sense of self and identity do not stay the same for long. *Melt* is a piece with explores this constant oscillation. The figure is depicted warping and melting in a clear state of turmoil. It is unclear where his self begins and ends; whether he is wearing a mask or if the strange, grotesque, melted mass is a part of him. Similarly, it is not always clear where our true selves begin and where the masks we wear for others end.

The piece takes advantage of how water-based markers will not immediately stick to the art board. They have a brief window where they can easily be spread, moved, and mixed in a way that other media cannot. The result is a fairly unique texture that is not quite like paint or marker.





SARAH SOVEREIGN, WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF
A., AND JENNIFER REYM.

I am, I am, I am

2018. *Photograph, 8" x 12"*

“I took a deep breath and listened to the old brag of my heart: I am, I am, I am”
– Sylvia Plath

There is a tendency to believe that the earth bends to our bodies, that our hands have free rein to shape and warp the bones of the world as we see fit. We forget that the earth cradles us beneath the sky, it feeds us and waters us; its laws nurture us in a dark universe. This image, of a nude woman held between the earth, trees, and sky, speaks not of an imagined hierarchical structure in which humanity reigns, but of a delicate balance through which humanity lives. So often in the disconnect there is a quiet, constant call to return to the nature of things, to bathe amongst the trees and rivers, to remind oneself of mortality – we do not visit nature: we are nature. The distinction between tree and ground becomes obscured in the space where reconnection thrives: in the winds, in the stability of earth, in the great heartbeat, if you listen: “I am, I am, I am” (Sylvia Plath). We are, we are, we are.

SHAUNTELLE SMALL

Steps

Against a twilight backdrop,
we pick our way through the tangled net of the jungle,
wander past the ackee trees and the mangoes.

My feet tread heavy,
stumble over the papaya leaves.
You are my barefoot guide. Barely up to my waist.

Take me to the white sand beach,
let the waves lick our feet, accept kisses
from the ones before us.

Lead me through the sugar-cane valley of our ancestors,
across an island peppered with the footprints,
of a family I have never known.

Teach me how to catch crabs with a butterfly net,
how to climb the neck of a coconut tree,
how to speak the language of the island breeze.

Show me what it means to belong.
Your small hand in mine is the first step.

RYAN LIDDIARD

A Rose in the Hills

In the middle of the night,
a white hand reached down
and planted a rose in the hills.

Throughout the night the rose grew,
rooting itself into the soil
and sapping the colour out of everything it touched—
the green trees collapsed into black,
the blue clouds retreated into grey,
and the brown herds faded into white.
The only colour that remained was red.

By dawn, the rose towered over the hills,
its incendiary petals and thorns
casting the valley into immutable darkness.

Having drained the hills dry,
the rose crawled down the hillside,
thirsting for the tears of the townspeople below.

Fearing their demise,
the townspeople packed their lives into minivans,
leaving behind only the bones of their existence.

With no wellspring from which to pull,
the rose wilted into ash,
and in the smoke that lingered for the days after,
roamed only a ghost of what once was.

KALEY SMALE

Lovelorn

You broke your bones
and contorted your body
to fit neatly into the mold
of the woman he wanted.
You cracked open your sternum
and handed him your beating heart;
he complained about the blood
dripping on the carpet
and left you to clean up the mess.

Now I watch you from the corner of the room,
light reflecting off your damp cheeks
as you pack overpriced pillows
into cardboard boxes.
All the things you bought
to make this concrete box
a place so comfortable
it would swallow you whole
and never spit you out.
Somehow, homemade dinners and slutty
lingerie were not enough.

One week ago, you thought
you were happy.
Here you are, packing all your memories
into boxes and stuffing them
in the trunk of my little hatchback.
I can take your heartache away
and store it in the corner
of our parents' garage, collecting dust,
until your bones begin to heal
and you're strong enough realize,
you never should have
broken them in the first place.

NADIA TUDHOPE

The Icebox

There's a heart in the freezer.

It's not a human heart—or at least, not at a real one. The thing is made of ice, but it so closely resembles the model of a human heart in the study that it makes her shiver. There are arteries and everything, tapering off into nothing. Something about it sends her own heart tripping in its rhythm, and still Iris finds herself picking it up, lifting it to the naked bulb in the garage to see the light glinting off the ice. The craftsmanship is perfect, like a sculptor had carved it lovingly from marble.

“What?” Iris whispers to herself, tilting it above her head. The light winks off the heart, the ice clear and even and uncracked. It's too perfect a replica. It's too unsettling to be real.

“What' what?” Danny asks, a smile in his voice, ducking his head into the garage. “You didn't eat all my popsicles, did you?”

“What is this?” Iris lowers her hand, the heart balanced on her palm. The ice seems to cling to her skin, cold seeping into her.

She watches his brow crinkle, the way it does when he's pretending, or about to lie. She knows him too well, is the thing. Even when he's good at hiding things from her, she's never truly fooled.

“Uh, a piece of ice?” he offers, like it isn't obvious that it's more than that. Like it isn't obvious he's trying to hide something from her when it's right there in her hand.

Iris waits. She feels the derisive lowering of her brows speaks for her.

Danny laughs—that's always his instinct, to try and diffuse situations with humor. The worst part is she always knows he's doing it and yet it always works.

“Okay, okay. I made it—isn’t it cool? I’m trying out a new hobby, and you know, I look at the model in my office everyday...”

It’s an odd explanation, but she can’t think of a better one. Why would someone make a heart out of ice? What could it possibly be for?

“Why ice?”

“I’m not ready for marble,” Danny grins. His smile is a little crooked, and she finds it terribly endearing. It’s a make-the-knees-weak sort of grin. Iris may have married him for this grin alone. “Ice is free, it doesn’t matter if I make mistakes yet.”

That would explain the technical perfection, if this isn’t his first try. Still, it’s... too perfect. He can’t have been at this hobby very long if she’s only just finding out about it.

“Hm,” is all she says, lifting the lid of the freezer and putting the heart carefully back.

The next day, Iris is still thinking about the heart made of ice.

She thinks of it as she makes Danny breakfast, as he heads off to work, as she showers, as she goes to work herself. She wonders if he’s made anything else. She wonders why he didn’t tell her about his new hobby, why he didn’t show her his creation.

But he wasn’t hiding it, either, she reassures herself. It was right there in the freezer for her to find.

Danny is extra-exuberant when he gets home. He cites a string of successful surgeries as the cause. Iris nods along idly to his incessant chatter. Eventually, he stops talking and starts eating. She asks him if he’s sculpted anything else.

“Oh, not really,” he says. “I didn’t save anything until it was perfect. Just hearts, hearts, hearts until I got it right. I’m thinking kidneys next, that’ll be

easy, right?” He laughs. His fork glints under the light of the kitchen lamp. He holds it the same way she’s seen him hold scalpels—precise, delicate, conscious of the tool’s movements even when he’s not actively using it.

“What about the ones that weren’t perfect? Why haven’t I seen any of your other sculptures?”

“I wouldn’t call them sculptures,” Danny says, pausing to spear another piece of steak. Precise, delicate, conscious of the tool’s movements. Silver glinting under the light. “And it’s ice, Iris. I let it melt and then refreeze it and start again.”

She wonders how many tries it took him to get it right. Danny has always been a perfectionist. He never does anything until he’s certain he can do it properly.

Iris wonders why she’s so obsessed with Danny’s new hobby. Maybe it wouldn’t be such a fixation if she actually saw him working on it. He stays late at work three days in a row. She finds herself searching for other ice sculptures. She wonders, again, why he chose ice.

But there’s nothing, just the heart in the freezer.

He comes home late with red smeared on his wrist. Blood-red lipstick, she thinks. She doesn’t comment on it. Danny notes her pursed lips, though, and curls an arm around her, all crooked grin and warm brown eyes.

“Iris,” he coos, “angel. Darling. What’s wrong? I’ve barely seen you all week and now you’re ignoring me.”

His skin is hot against hers, his fingers digging into her side possessively. It feels like he’s branding her, like ownership, like she’ll find marks burnt there in the shape of his hands. He leans in to kiss under her jaw. The red smudge on his wrist taunts her. She presses her fingers to it so she doesn’t have to look at it anymore, feeling his pulse fast against her fingertips. His wrists, his lips, every inch of him is warm warm warm against her.

“You’ve been distant, lately,” he sighs. That’s not her fault—he’s the one that’s

been working late. He's the one coming home with lipstick smudges all over him. "I miss you, my flower." It's an old joke, this flower analogy. Iris, my flower, he used to say. Danny, my sunshine, she used to respond. It's not the best metaphor; flowers wilt and die, and the sun might set earlier in the winter but it's still alive and circling, shining its rays on new flowers each year.

She thinks about the heart in the freezer, imagines its arteries pulsing in time with his.

Iris tries for four days not to think about the heart in the freezer. And, of lesser importance, she tries for four days not to think about the lipstick smudge on Danny's wrist. And, of equal importance, she tries for four days not to think about how many times Danny came home late this week. And, of equal and terrifying importance, she wonders what's wrong with her, that she cares more about the heart in the freezer than the prospect of her husband's unfaithfulness.

He's late again. She calls the hospital.

"Oh, he went home early today," the girl on the phone says.

"He did? How early?"

"Um...at three."

"And what about last week, did he go home early at all?" She's impressed with the evenness of her voice when it feels like she's gritting the words through her teeth.

"Yes, actually!" This girl's voice is so chipper it sparks something angry in Iris's chest. She wonders what this girl looks like. She wonders if she wears red lipstick. "He went home at three on Tuesday and Thursday."

Iris hangs up the phone.

Danny comes home with the crooked grin already in place, like he knows what she's thinking, like premeditation. There's a fleck of red behind his ear, the same bright crimson as the mark on his wrist last week. She doesn't comment on that, either.

Her husband's grin doesn't slip.

She decides to make chicken for dinner, because it's his least favourite of her dinners, but he doesn't know that she knows that. She flicks on the light to the garage absently, humming to herself, but when she reaches the freezer she pauses. The heart is in there, she knows, though she hasn't seen it since she first found out about it.

It's ice, Iris. I let it melt and then refreeze it and try again.

I'm thinking kidneys next, that'll be easy, right?

She is struck with a sudden fear, then, that the heart will be gone. But when she starts to lift the freezer's lid, she realizes she is just as afraid of seeing it again. There's something unsettling about the perfection of its replication, like Danny cut out a real heart and froze it, rather than carving one from ice.

The heart of ice is still there. Frost clings to its nooks and crannies, and the ice that shows through glints in the low light of the garage. She holds her breath. She feels compelled to reach out and touch it, just as she was the first time, but at the same time feels that if her fingers brush its surface they'll come away burned. No, frostbitten.

Iris shivers and decides against chicken for dinner, after all.

Iris is trapped in the freezer. The cold seeps into her bones, frost brushing her skin, laboured breaths coming out in clouds of white. She fears she's been here long enough for her fingertips to turn black.

She scratches at the lid of the freezer, claws at it until her nailbeds bleed,

unable to lift it even an inch. When she screams, the cold leaks into her lungs and freezes them.

Iris jerks awake, gasping, lungs burning with cold.

Daniel sleeps beside her, unaware, the little fleck of red still behind his ear. It looks more like blood than lipstick in the dark of their room, fresh from a nightmare. Iris brings her hands close to her eyes to check if her nailbeds are bleeding.

Her bare feet touch the floor. She finds herself moving toward the garage.

When she lifts the lid of the freezer, the cold seems to ooze out in clouds, like dry ice. The heart is still in there. It feels like it's taunting her, like it sent her the nightmare itself. The very sight of it fills her with foreboding.

She wants to smash it, wants to watch it shatter like glass against the garage floor, irreparable, imperfect.

She doesn't know why she doesn't.

Instead, Iris closes the freezer and goes back to bed.

"I have a surprise for you," Danny tells her over breakfast, mouth full of eggs and eyes glinting.

"Oh?" Iris swirls the coffee in her cup. The cream is off, and she watches it separate.

"I'll show you tonight," he says, kissing her forehead on his way up from the table. "Have fun at work, darling."

Iris does not have fun at work. Iris spends her whole shift thinking about his private office and how she can get access to his patient list.

Danny makes her dinner and puts out the good red wine. There are even roses, the same bright crimson as the smudge on his wrist, behind his ear.

The wine goes to her head faster than usual, making her head spin. The

smell of it, combined with the roses, is rich and heady. The room spins when she stands, and Danny carries her to bed. She dreams of the red smudges on his skin blooming into roses.

Iris wakes, feeling cold. For a moment, she thinks she's still in a dream, trapped in the freezer with the ice heart. Her chest hurts the same way it did after that dream, like her lungs are full of cold air.

No, not her lungs.

Her chest is throbbing, she realizes, now that she's paying more attention to it, but only on the left side. Something feels sticky, but she's overwhelmed with the sense of cold, like she's swallowed a chunk of ice and it's lodged in her chest. Like something inside her is frozen.

Iris sits up, and presses a hand to her chest, trying to measure her breathing in frostbitten lungs. Her palm brushes something that's not skin, that's not the fabric of her nightgown. Instead, taped neat and precise over her heart, is a bloodied bandage.

In her mind, half-dreamt and half-memory, she can see Danny holding a scalpel—precise, delicate, conscious of the tool's movements. In her mind, half-dreamt, he plunges it into her chest and cuts.

Iris' scream gets strangled in her chest. She tries, again, to measure her breathing. The cold inside her burns.

Iris finds her feet on the ground, finds herself moving toward the garage, not sure if she's awake or still trapped in a nightmare. Not sure if there's a difference.

There are smudges of red on the garage floor, that same bright crimson she's seen on Danny's wrist, behind his ear, on the roses last night. No, not smudges—drops of blood.

She moves, trance-like toward the freezer. She's afraid of what she'll see

when she opens the lid. She's afraid of what she won't see.

Her heart seems to stutter unsteadily in her chest, cold coursing through her.

I didn't save anything until it was perfect. Just hearts, hearts, hearts until I got it right.

Iris steps in a drop of blood, opens the lid. Catches a glimpse of something red and big enough to hold in her hand, coated in frost and aching familiar.

There's a heart in the freezer.

It's hers.

JENNY HAMILTON

Silone

2018. *Photograph*, 8" x 10"

The very act of looking up implies that the body is still. It is difficult (and potentially dangerous!) to be visually focused on what lies above you and also be moving your body forward at the same time. To me, our world seems to be increasingly obsessed with getting ahead, progressing to the next big thing. So much of our mindset is often biased towards what lies in front of us and obviously in our field of view. How often do we get the chance to simply lie on our backs and look up? My desire was to comment on the perspective obtained when the body is still and our gaze is turned to the sky.

Photographed inside a grain silo, *Silone* is one piece in a series called *Up*. Captured in 35mm film, this series aims to document the world by capturing the scene when one looks up instead of straight ahead. The straight ahead viewpoint implies to me knowing where you are going and what is in front of you. It is what we are most concerned with and preoccupied by. By focusing on common objects with an uncommon perspective, I hope that the physical structure of the object itself becomes secondary to the symmetry, texture, shadow and balance that an uncommon perspective brings. For it is these qualities that I believe lend themselves well to moments of stillness and harmony.





EMILIE KVIST

Plugged in Parenting

2018. *Paint on canvas, specifications not provided.*

Plugged in Parenting is a reflection of the disconnection that technology can cause between parents and their children. Recently, with the expansion of technology, the typical modern home contains a variety of electronics, the most common being cell phones. But what effects do the influences of such technologies have on young individuals and families? Cell phones are cleverly compact, allowing users to take them anywhere. This has both benefits, such as connectivity, and consequences. For example, studies have shown cell phones affect the quality of family interactions.

Young children can be a handful, causing some parents to use electronic devices as a means of distraction so they can get things done. Although I am not opposed to the use of technology for educational purposes, overuse of these devices has been correlated with shorter attention spans in children.

Can such technology be used for advantageous purposes? Or is it merely a distraction from what's truly important?

Contributors

Sequel Adamson: Sequel Adamson is in her first year of a bachelor's of science degree. She lives literally halfway between Hope and Hell's Gate in a tiny town called Yale. Her other skills include mediocre Asian cooking, poorly timed jokes and sub-par ukulele skills. Sequel only writes poetry when angry. She has a very short temper so she writes often.

Bethany Cannon: Beth Cannon is a very broke university student at UFV, majoring in English. She has never recovered from the fact that "dragon rider" is not a career option, but figures that working in the FVRL as a Page is almost as cool. Beth has a slight chocolate-addiction and is a firm believer that one can never have too many cats.

Jocelyn Coupland: Jocelyn Coupland is a student at UFV who's lived in every biome in BC except the temperate rainforest. She loves reading and writing and writing and drawing and reading and Pokémon. All these things have come in handy as she pursues the paths that an English major can lead to. Sometimes a degree takes seven years to acquire, but don't sweat it, the journey is just as important as the destination.

Katie Diespecker: Katie Diespecker is an artist from Agassiz and a UFV alumni with a BSc in Biology. She likes experimenting with a variety of different media and subjects, from abstract painting to life drawing. Her work often centers around internal conditions and conflicts, fantasy, technology, and a touch of the macabre. She has also done digital design and illustration for UFV's Academic Success Centre.

Ariel Ezergailis: Ariel Ezergailis is a second year student at UFV, studying English literature and history, with the hope of moving on to teach others after she finishes her degree. She believes that everybody can be a poet, and that art is the best way to turn a confusing and explosive reality into something beautiful.

Jenny Hamilton: I studied film and theater at Simon Fraser University before deciding to switch to Biology. After completing my Biology degree in 2004 I began working for the Biology department at UFV but realized I really missed expressing myself visually and began to pick up my camera again. I have taken a few film photography courses with the Visual Art department at UFV and have also been a part of group exhibitions in Vancouver as well. I was also published in *Louden Singletree* in 2012 and 2015.

Aasha Khoyratty: Aasha Khoyratty, from Mission, B.C. is a second year student at UFV working towards her English degree. An aspiring writer with a passion for poetry as well as creative non-fiction, she plans to pursue teaching after she graduates and to never give up her love for writing, reading, and learning.

Jason Koop: Jason Koop is a creative writing student at the University of the Fraser Valley, from Mission. He focuses on novels and poetry, and has worked as an interactive entertainment media writer, ranging from technical writing to public relations, to creative writing.

Emilie Kvist: I am a fourth year student at UFV, currently completing a Bachelor of Arts with a major in history and an extended minor in visual arts. I have always loved creating work in many different mediums like sculpture, painting, mixed mediums and dance. The ability to express one's self creatively often allows me to personally resolve times of stress, while in the same moment striving to add positive into the world.

Scott McQuarrie: Scott McQuarrie is a writer. Well, not yet. Soon. One day, perhaps. Arguably, he writes, so he's a writer. But he's so new. So brand-spanky new and has so much to learn! He starts sentences with 'So'. Not a professional. Though he has been paid to write. Once, so far. Kind of sad, really. But still, paid writing! That has to count for something. Scott McQuarrie is a professional writer. Oooh, that rolls off the tongue. Cliché. Not a professional. Well, not yet. Soon. One day, perhaps.

Lucy Mulder: I am a third-year student majoring in English Literature and minoring in Theatre at UFV. I have always had a passion for writing poetry and I hope to pursue a career as a writer and secondary school teacher. I currently work as an education assistant and freelance photographer. In my spare time I enjoy exploring the outdoors and spending time with friends and family!

Jinnie Saran: Currently in her 2nd year at UFV, Harjinder Saran plans to graduate with a Bachelor of Arts degree focusing on History and creative writing. She is thoroughly enjoying writing classes at UFV, strengthening her love for reading and writing. Harjinder first future goals as an aspiring writer is to publish a poetry collection. Harjinder enjoys being involved a non-profit, currently serving her third term as the youth representative on their board of directors. Blind herself, Harjinder has been public speaking about blindness since 2015, resulting in her presenting her own talk at a locally organized TEDx conference last November.

Krystal Savard: Krystal Savard is a fourth year English Major at the University of the Fraser Valley. After a career as a legal assistant she returned to university to finish her degree and follow her passion of writing. When she's not studying you'll find her at the barn working with Arabian show horses.

Kaley Smale: My name is Kaley, I'm an English Literature major at UFV. I have always loved creative writing, specifically poetry. I started writing, as a hobby, when I was fourteen and it's continued to be a passion of mine into adulthood. I gather inspiration for my writing from everyday events, although ultimately it is fiction. I hope to continue writing and publishing well into the future.

Sarah Sovereign: Sarah Sovereign, a Chilliwack photographer with her MA in Counselling, explores themes of grief, loss, and trauma in her work, using art-making as a process for healing, storytelling, connection and amplification. Her work can be found at www.sarahsovereign.com, and on Instagram at [@sarahsovereign](https://www.instagram.com/sarahsovereign).

Nadia Tudhope: Nadia Tudhope has wanted to be a writer since she was five years old. Since then, she has spent her time trying to strike the fragile balance between being a dreamer and having a liveable paycheck. On sunny afternoons, she can be found sequestered on the porch, reading with her pug, Brutis.

Darien Unger: Darien Unger is a first year student from Rosedale, British Columbia, who has been passionate about writing for nearly a decade.

Brandon Wolfe: Brandon Wolfe is a nineteen year old student artist, Currently in his fourth semester taking painting classes. He has been Creating art since late 2017. He is now working on improving his charcoal drawings, learning how to paint, and working on his new art form of wood burning. After creating a bear wood burning, piece he now plans on making more animal portraits with wood burning to go along with his charcoal drawings. Brandon wolfe lives in Aldergrove, British Columbia.

Sam Young: Samuel Young is a writer, sometime podcast host, and self-described dork living in Mission, BC. After spending years exclusively writing non-fiction, he is a relative latecomer to the world of creative writing, where he has discovered new passions for both fiction and poetry. He is in his fourth year at UFV.

The *Louden Singletree* is UFV's literary and visual arts journal. Since its inception in 2009, the *Louden Singletree* has been a forum in which students, alumni, faculty, and staff of the university can share their creative work.

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